Herskovits & Herskovits 1-5 (1929-1930) 1934
[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
Jamaica



its influence on the life of man, and both employ the word *okra* for soul, a word used on the Gold Coast of Africa exactly as it is in Guiana. The day names associated with the soul are Gold Coast day names, known in Jamaica and heard in the United States, as well. In the bush the Saramacca people are "possessed" by the gods and by *obia;* in the town the Negroes are "possessed" by *winti*, a word meaning wind, and the use of wind as a euphemism for the gods is common in Dahomey and Ashanti. Many of the gods of both bush and town are the same, and they are African gods, invoked today in Nigeria, in Dahomey, in Togo, in Ashanti, and invoked also in the islands of the Caribbean. *Nyankompon*, the Bush Negro name for the Sky God, is the Gold Coast name. The Maroons of Jamaica know this deity under the same designation. *Dagowe* is a snake god in the Surinaame bush and in town—the Haitians and Dahomeans dance to the same snake god, whom they call *Dangbe*. In West Africa the silk-cotton and *loko* trees are sacred. In the Saramacca villages and in the town of Parimaribo they are sacred as well, and the names are Dahomean names, known also in Haiti. In bush and town the people dance to the river gods, as do the Negroes in Africa and the Caribbean, and the pattern of the ceremonies has been preserved in part in Negro baptismal rites in the United States. Bush and town invoke the buzzard, *Opete*, so named in Ashanti, and sacred everywhere in West Africa, and the style of dancing resembles certain of the dances of the "saints" who "shout" in the Negro Sanctified Churches of the United States.

Between bush and town there is, however, this difference—the bush is Africa of the seventeenth century. In West Africa today, for example, the roof of thatch has almost everywhere given way to the white man's metal roofing. In Dahomey, where thatch is still found, we discovered a strip of wall made of woven palm fronds, such as is found on the Saramacca, in a village which had been enslaved by the Dahomean kings in the early seventeenth century and had remained enslaved until the conquest

M. Herskovits & Herskovits S-6 (1932-1933) 1934
Bush Negroes
Saramacca



of the Dahomean kingdom by the French. All other walls are of swish. Today in West Africa the automobile and sewing machine have found their way into remote corners. But more important still than these changes wrought by European civilizations, which have made inroads chiefly on the material life of the Africans, are those resulting from intertribal wars, which followed the introduction of guns and gunpowder into Africa and which helped to establish the great West African dynasties. The result of the conquest of one native people by another was constant cultural interstimulation which made for changes in the indigenous civilizations.

In the Guiana bush, however, where these runaway Negroes and their descendants have been living, the fortunes of African kingdoms, the cultural contacts that have affected the Africans, have not touched their own tribal destinies. Neither has the civilization of the white man nor that of the Indian introduced basic changes into their manner of living or thinking.

There are no roads in the Guiana bush, and what footpaths exist to connect one village with another are difficult to follow and, moreover, are not for the stranger, whether he be white or mulatto. For such as these the highway is the river, with native paddlers alert in their surveillance of a stranger's activities. The old men on the river have made a tradition of recalling the struggle of the ancestors for freedom and survival, and it is not without significance that one of the three worst crimes among the Bush Negroes—one that ranks with incest and murder—is informing on a Negro to a white man.

In contrast with this isolation of the Bush Negroes, the Negroes of Paramaribo have known close contact with the whites, with Carib and Arawak Indians, and in more recent years with the Hindu and Javanese laborers brought to the colony. Only suggestions of the manner in which the beliefs of town and bush correspond or differ can be included here, since this account concerns itself with the Saramacca people. Yet for the understanding of this study it must be

Herskovits & Herskovits B-8 (1930-1939) 1934
968 Bush Negroes SR
Saramacca

Village elders on a ceremonial visit.

[Facing P. 24]

[illegible] & Herskovits E-5 (1929-1932) 1934
[illegible] Negroes 283
Surinam



said, "It is not a woman and a snake, as you might imagine from this," and she indicated one or two lines of the design. "We do not carve the snake in my family. We have a *tchina*—a taboo—against carving snakes, for snakes are our kunu. . . . Years ago my brother went to the French shore and worked for a white man. The white man asked him to kill a snake, and he was afraid, but the white man laughed at him, and because he had a weak ak'a, because his soul was not strong, he killed the snake. If he had told us about it and had sent a piece of the snake, we would have held a burial, as would have been right. But he did not do as he should have done, and so now the snake is not a good spirit for us. We must give it offerings, and dance kunu. It is bad to have a weak soul. My brother did a bad thing, and now I and all my children, and my daughters' children, and their daughters' children on and on will have this kunu."

Farther up the river, in the deep interior, we stopped at the village of Opoku. As we walked to the house of the village head to give him our greetings, we noticed an unusually large house. It was a *lobo-wosu*, a house with an upper story, more substantially built than any we passed, and ornamented with elaborate carvings, as were all personal houses of the men. The owner of it, we heard, had been dead eight months. Four more would need to go by before it could be entered. It had been owned by a powerful man, and his belongings were many. We could see some of them through the openings between the slats which formed its walls—an apinti drum, magnificently carved, tall earthen demijohns of rum, boxes, the edge of a metal canister and a lamp. Inside there were guns, and machetes, and native carved paddles, and implements.

Our men joked about the contents of the demijohns as they passed, speculating on the strength of the rum when the containers were opened, and when we asked about the house later—whether, for instance, we could not buy the drum, we were told that the twelve-month interval between a man's dying and the dividing of his property was not yet passed. When the time came, his brothers and sisters

Baikutu, Chief Fandya's village.

[Facing p. 90]

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Dwelling houses.

Carved door of a man's house (right).

A *gada mora*—man's personal house.

[ Facing P. 130 ]

Is Herskovits & Herskovits E-4 (1931-1932) 1934
[illegible]
Sacramento



family. The children of the second wife belong to the family of the second wife. A woman calls her husband's other wife by the name of kamboss. Do you know what kamboss means?" he asked, laughing. "*Kamboss*—the woman who makes trouble for me. So, you see, we people of the bush learned from our ancestors to give each wife her own house, where she might live with her own children."

But not alone the woman needed to have a house of her own. The man, too, built a house for himself. In it he stored his possessions. It was his sanctuary. No woman might enter it. On the carving of its door, a man lavished all his love of ornamentation, all his artistry.

"A man likes to have his own house for his possessions," explained Kasanya. "If he is a rich man, it is better that his wives do not know how much he has. You know what women are. They always ask for presents. But if a man is not rich, then it is better still that his wives do not know it. If they know, they will make life hard for him with nagging. They will talk of leaving him. And all the village will know, too."

In this house, then, which a man built for his wife, the children were reared. Sometimes, it is true, if the harvests were poor or the father had met with ill luck, the mother's brothers would come for the children, for children are the ones to carry on the line. It is through them that clan rank and material goods are inherited.

But if all went well with the father, then the attachments of the household were the closest, and they continued even after death. For the household was not entirely disrupted after the death of a parent. Unless the one who died had been a sorcerer, a leper, or a madman, the house where he lived was not torn down.

"When a man dies," Kasanya said, "the wife goes on living in the house, once it has been purified. If a woman dies, then the man keeps on living there."

"What of the children?" we asked. "What becomes of them?"

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca



782 "Tonight there will be dancing for you," And'u said, when we left the shrine. "I will go and pray again before the dance, and then I will go to my hammock early, for I leave at sunrise. We will meet again at the G'aman's."

The bassia's wife followed us to our house.

[562] "You are a woman, yet you went inside the shrine. Maybe you do have gods, white woman. When you go in again will you pray to the Earth Mother for the woman Kupa, who is my sister? Twice she bore girl children, and both [842] sleep. Now she is with child again. She wears many obias about her neck, and daily she washes with white clay. She is the woman with the wooden obia doll hanging between her breasts. No, not the one who has the small black sack about her neck. Any woman who is with child wears that. You will know her when you see her. She is beautiful."

7

535 The dance was held in the bassia's quarter, in front of one of his houses. The bassia was a man of wealth. He had three wives, while the chief had but two. Whether one of the three was only nominally his wife and had come to him at the death of a brother, we were unable to learn, but that [342] his means were large was apparent. The house where his personal possessions were stored was built high on posts. A house so raised stood out from those about it and bore the same name as the moon. Underneath it, in the shelter made by the posts, lay a partly made drum, some carved wooden implements, and carpenter's tools. There was also a forked stick in the ground upon which rested a black obia pot with water and weeds in it.

535 The children began the dancing.

533

*Ayo, ayo*
*Ayo, ayei,*
*Agida comes,*
[539] *Ayo, ayo,*
*Earth spirits come,*
*Ayo, ayei.*

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

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501
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"In the true, true Saramacca . . . "

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House of one recently dead.

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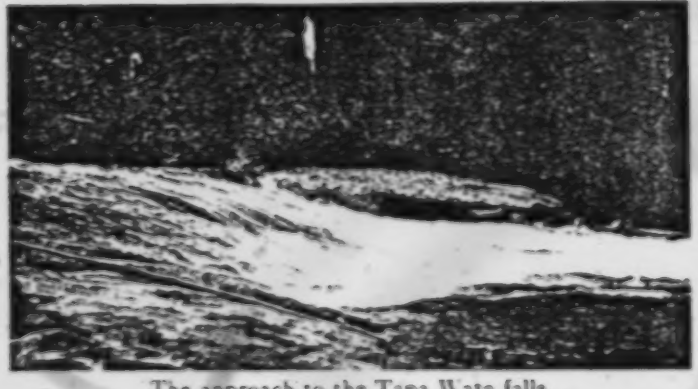

The approach to the Tapa Wata falls.

[p. 170 (A)]

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca



"Yes, move closer."

The white woman now went toward the open door, and through it saw a little of the inside of the house. Like all Bush Negro houses, it had no windows of any kind, and what light there was came from this low open doorway. Near the door sat the woman who belonged to the family of the Granman. In her hand she held an egg-shaped piece of clay which she rubbed between her hands to the rhythm of her song, and at intervals lifted first one hand, then the other, rubbing the white clay on her face and arms. The thin layer of white over the dark of her skin gave to her appearance in the dark house a strange color. She swayed on her low bench as she sang, her body curving from her hips first to one side, then to the other.

"Ondyi, ondyi," she sang over and over, and with the quickening of voice, she called "bonsu."

This word "Ondyi," the women explained, when they urged the stranger to greet the god as was fitting, was the greeting of the deity, the god's way of saying their everyday word "Odi."

The eyes of the woman at the door were half-closed as she sang, and she seemed dispirited, though with the quickened swaying she did rouse herself for an instant. She had no kerchief on her head, and none about her breasts.

"Her god hasn't got her very hard," the women said. "Go inside, perhaps when you speak with him, he will begin to stir. They want you to come in."

Into the house the white woman brought her bench, and sat down close to the possessed woman at the door. When she became accustomed to the darkness of the house, she saw a pair of eyes fixed on her from the farthest wall. The figure against this wall was so much the color of the house itself that it was not until a few moments had passed that the crouching form of an old woman was distinguishable. The old woman sat motionless, her eyes fastened on the stranger.

The white woman freed herself from the intent stare of the old woman against the wall only when a sudden

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca



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[539]

*"Wife of the G'aman,*
*I come from the river.*
*Go to the G'aman*
*Say to him,*
*These strangers are friends,*
*They bring no evil."*

It was the god speaking, and the Granman's wife received with lowered head the words spoken through the priestess.

"Ai, my master. Ai, Massa Gadu," she said.

5

The Granman's paternal village was directly across the river from Asindopo Lantiwe. It was called Akisiamau, literally "Took with an outstretched hand," but whether there was also some meaning in the phrase not intended for the uninitiated, we could not learn. In size it was not much larger than the Granman's village, and again and again we recognized houses which were his by the crest-like carvings on the doorposts, that reproduced the design found not only at the side of the council-house door, but at the door of all other houses at Asindopo Lantiwe which were his.

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[423]

Except for several old people who sat about in the shade and waited for the strangers to come to them with their greetings, the entire village followed us as we made our way down one path and another.

123

"*Bak'a, Ame'ika Bak'a, Ame'ika Fandya!*—White man. American white man, American Fandya!" the children called after us, as they ran at our heels, touching our canteens, our sun helmets, and shoes.

The Granman had spoken with especial fondness of his father's house, and it was there that we asked first to be taken. It was not occupied, we were told, and none might enter it. Above the top crosspiece white cotton was draped. Except that its door was closed, it showed no signs of being

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1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca



342 643 uninhabited. Its posts and walls and thatch were in excellent condition, and there was not even the weather-beaten appearance about it of a house which had been closed for some time. Nor had it the kandu, the spiritual lock of unoccupied houses.

778 396 To one side of this house was the open shrine to the great gods, the pole to the Sky God, the smaller one with a checked tunic across the middle of it for the Earth Mother. But there was also a figure of wood with a broad white cloth hung from it like a flag, and this, the villagers said, was the image of the Granman's father. When the dead man's spirit came to the village, it was this image he animated. In times of need and on days fixed by ritual, it was to this image that prayers and food were brought.

Some distance from this shrine, standing close to the uncleared bush, was a house that had been deserted. Half of it the great bush had already reclaimed. The thatch of the roof and one entire side wall had altogether disappeared, and in place of these were garlands of leafy vines, so closely interwoven and so brilliantly green in the sun as to give to the asymmetrical mass of weathered grayish palm, and the strangling green, a strange beauty. Not quite two years ago it had been abandoned, and soon it would be completely lost to the bush.

But the villagers looked the other way when we photographed it.

A little to one side of the house with the doorposts which showed the Granman's crests was a smaller hut, before whose door stretched a magic azang of palm fronds that marked it as a shrine.

[789] [796] "This house is for the Apuku gods," said an old woman who heard our inquiry. "It belongs to me. It was built when my god told me to make it."

And without hesitation she led the way under the palm fronds through the opening.

This was the first time we had been permitted to enter a closed shrine. We had had descriptions of shrines from men with whom we had talked of the gods. There were some,

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SRS Bush Negroes SRS
Saramacca



123 "You must have strong obia from Africa—strong snake
187 obia—for the gods to have spoken so well of you!"

But when the Granman asked, there was no refusing. That day word was sent to all in the village that the Bakra was giving a cinema show in the bush.

Long before dark the entire village had gathered in front of our doorway. The children had been around since early afternoon. Against the council-house wall we hung a white sheet, and some feet away we stood our folding table and on it the little projector. The show was about to begin.

[354] The Granman who sat a little to one side gave orders to the latecomers to extinguish the flames of their small oil lamps and their lanterns, and the large torch which he had so proudly shown that first night, and which had since illuminated the clearing nightly, was also extinguished.

The illustrations we had photographed were from volumes on the people of the West Coast of Africa—Ashanti and the Gold Coast, Dahomey, Nigeria, Benin, the Cameroons, Loango, and the Congo. Our first year's experiences among these people had taught us that it would not be well to show them too many ceremonial pictures. Photographs of sacrifices of animals other than fowls, we had felt, too, would not be wise to introduce. Such a picture as that of the Ashanti Sasabonsum, the "evil Apuku," as the Bush Negroes whom we had allowed to see the illustration named it, we had also decided should best be shown to individuals here and there. For the general showing, we relied upon pictures of cicatrizations, of hairdressing and teeth filing, of rafts floating on African lakes, of pottery making and cloth weaving, of laying fires and the doing of other household tasks, of carvings, and finally of one or two priests and priestesses in states of possession.

We waited for a signal from the Granman to begin. About
● [342] the dark clearing the huts, with their roof poles meeting on top like great horns, gave a strange effect to the scene, for with the moving and shifting of bare feet it seemed as though everything in that clearing strained to fall in line

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

## THE ARTIST OF MA'LOBBI

As we walked toward the chief's house we looked about us, seeing again the evidence that here at Ma'lobbi there were men who knew how to carve wood, seeing why it was that our paddlers had spoken of it as a place for fine work.

"Ai, at Ma'lobbi they are good carvers."

Here was a house with its doorposts elaborately carved; there a beautifully worked rice tray, lying where it had been left by the woman who owned it, until she should need it later in the day for winnowing her rice; farther along a great bench stood, with the designs cut through in a fluid progression over top and sides.

The captain was in the lower portion of his two-story house when we entered. Several of the older men, who had been present at our earlier visit and who remembered our gifts of tobacco, came to join us, as the news of our arrival spread through the village. Soon the women were standing about, motioning to the white woman to come with them.

The house in which the captain received us was larger and more imposing than the others in the village. It was his *gudu-wosu*—his treasure house. Its lower portion, where we sat in conversation with him, was where he worked. Above, where none of his wives might enter, his wealth was stored. Here he kept the pieces he had carved, and from here drew from time to time the presents he gave his wives. Here lay the wealth which his nephews would inherit when he died. But below, in the partially open shelter, was his workshop where he fashioned rough logs into stools and paddles, combs and food stirrers, trays and canoe seats, and all manner of objects which he and his women used in their daily routine.

All about the walls hung tools. There were machetes, whose sharp blades showed a reflection of fire from the sun which slanted on the wall. We had never seen so many of these bush knives on display, nor, for that matter, such an array of tools anywhere on this river. From projecting boards or nails driven into posts hung several compasses, their hinged arms sharp-pointed, so that the craftsman might describe the perfect circles on the wood he carved.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

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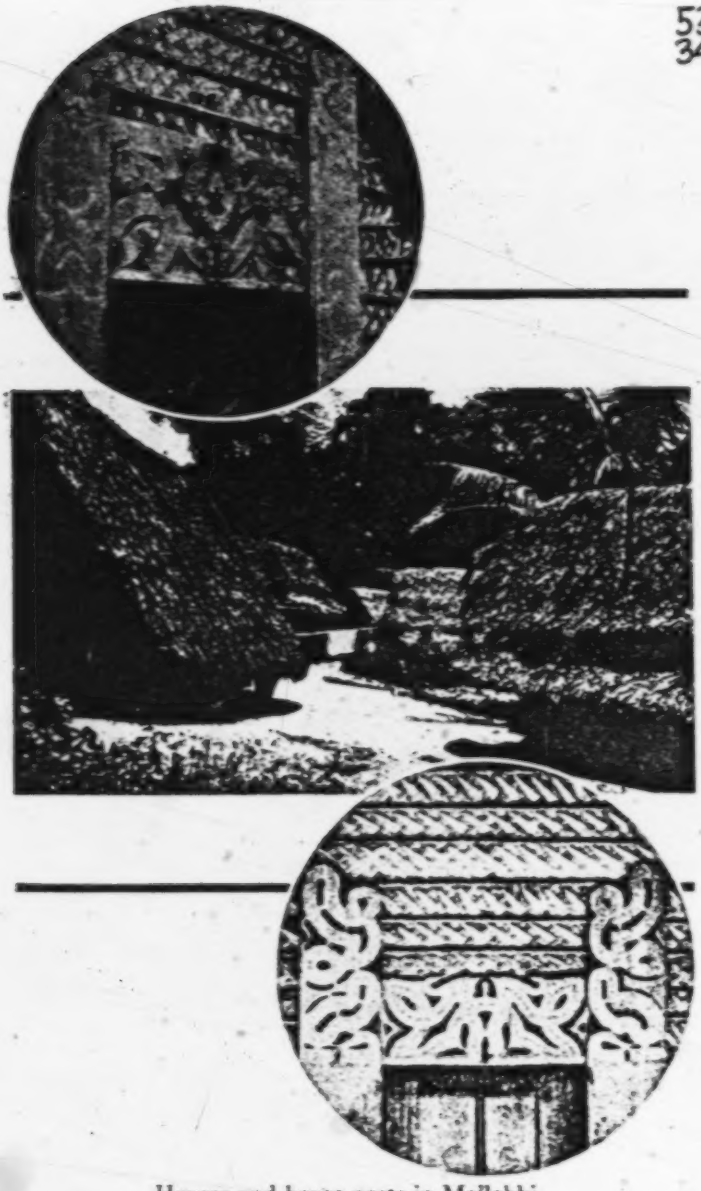

Houses and house posts in Ma'lobbi.

[Facing P. 284]

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca



houses would have to be built—one in his village where they would live, and one in the provision ground for his wife to sleep in when she worked in the field. Then 584 [342]

"Must you yourself build the house, Bayo?"

"My family will help me. Making a house is hard work, too, and a man must have clever fingers for weaving the walls." [416] [462]

There would have to be stools, and several well-ornamented combs. A clothes beater would have to be provided for the bride, and a peanut pounding board, and one mortar and pestle at least, and food stirrers and rice trays. A cassava squeezer would have to be woven, and a sifter and grater for the roots that were made into bread. And baskets, too, he would have to weave.

"This is not all. This is only what I must make. Other things I must buy for her."

He would have to provide cloths when the wedding day came, and cloths for his mother-in-law, too. The small kerchiefs which were folded in triangular shape and were worn about the waist as the sign that a woman was married he would also have to furnish, and two large cloths, each the size of three tunics. He would have to buy an iron cooking pot, and some small fishhooks with lines, and some cups from the white man's city. He was going to give his girl a pair of earrings, and a string of beads. Then there would have to be the hammock. [585] [945]

Bayo laughed, "For a marriage, there must be a hammock."

There were other things he was going to buy for his girl. Brass arm and leg ornaments he would buy, since his girl was already a fine dancer.

And when all these things were bought and given, then it was time for the marriage.

"But it doesn't always happen that the marriage takes place," said Bayo. "Sometimes the girl's people do not like what the man has done. They have another krutu, and decide the man should not marry into their family."

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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The First Glimpse of a Bush Negro Village on the Upper Surinam River.

[Facing p. 32]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner



361 the trading-post, are so large as to have street-like roads extending across them. Others like Nu have only eight or nine huts.

342 The walls and roofs of the dwellings are made of grasses and reeds, intricately woven into a herring-bone pattern that can be seen in the photographs. So tightly are they woven that the jungle rain does not penetrate. The uprights are hewn out of tree trunks, and those that form the doorway are [322] often deeply carved. So great is the decorative spirit of these people that every common utensil is carved until it becomes a work of art.

The roofs extend far beyond the walls, so that the projecting part throws a shadow on the walls, which lowers the temperature inside. In front, the roof extends a yard or more to form a shade in which the blacks may palaver. In front of the huts, always, babies are grubbing about in the dirt and yelling prodigiously.

Here and there are slightly dilapidated huts. They belong [768] to people now dead. No one will live in them or venture to repair the ruin of time. Neglected, they sink into decay. The [756] witch doctor's hut is also a bit frowzy; it seems to be a badge of his profession, like the sugar cane planted alongside his doorway or the turtle-shell impaled on a staff near by. All three are symbols of his calling.

352 A wall of woven mat divides some of the huts into two [353] rooms, the back room being used for sleeping. The men have hand-made hammocks of woven cotton or grass. Their wives 342 are provided with sleeping-mats on the floor. The front room

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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Clearing in a Bush Negro Village, Upper Surinam River.

[Facing p. 44]

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner



is used as a living-room; cooking is sometimes carried on there, but more often in an open communal kitchen used by the entire village. Some towns have several such open sheds.

We enter the hut where the headman of the village lives, and find him lying in his hammock. It is perhaps a bit of conscious arrogance, to demonstrate his independence of the white man, that the captain does not rise to greet us. He rises, however, to greet Abaisa.

"Well, friend, how are you?" we begin. In talkee-talkee the question runs: *"So, matti, fie you tang?"*

He replies civilly, complaining a little, perhaps. We offer him a few leaves of tobacco, always acceptable. While we parley with the chief, the men of the village are carrying our equipment up from the corials to the village. This they always do, without being asked and without being paid. Even small children take part in the portage. Nothing is ever stolen.

Quite conscious of the heat inside the dark hut, we do not palaver long. Leaving the two chiefs lolling in hammocks we pass out of the breast-high doorway into the clearing, and go about examining the living-quarters and the people. This is a village of the Saramaccaner tribe, descended from the Saramacca rebels of two hundred years ago. All the huts and villages of this tribe are quite similar. Among the Aucaner tribe, descended from the Ouca rebels, are villages of a different type.

One does not doubt the good intentions of the Moravian Brothers and certain Catholics who have established missions at a few points on the rivers. But their evangelical efforts have

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

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Interior of a Bush Negro Village on the Cottica River, Dutch Guiana. *Aucaner Tribe.*
*Photo by Klein*

[Facing p. 46]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Palm Fronds Recently Cut to be Used for Thatching a Hut.
*Boni Tribe*, French Guiana.

[Facing p. 50]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

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An Aucaner Mother. Note the Canava Cakes Cooking Inside the Kitchen.
*Photo by Curtis*

[Facing p. 64]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



224 hardly more than shadows. We find the man unharmed,
648 excited and voluble. He encountered a puma, a large one. He fired at close range and wounded it. We see a track of blood, and instantly set out to follow it. It is too dark now; we are forced to retreat back to camp, blazing the trees along the route to find the trail in the morning.

[342] At camp the Djukas erect four uprights and a roof of palm frond, as a shield from the rain and heavy dew. Another is rigged for their own use, and the hammocks are slung underneath. Again they sit up around the campfire and tell loud stories, the same ones, probably.

Sitting by the campfire in the pathless interior, thinking of the hundreds of desperate and difficult miles of surrounding jungle, blue by day and black by night, in the company of a few Negroes without whom it would be impossible to return, it is difficult for anyone to escape a feeling of weakness and insignificance. One scoffs at the black man's superstitions, his amulets and guardian spirits, but in the bush at night one senses the overpowering magnitude of the fierce wilderness, one begins to understand his need for such things as a protection against the psychological powers of the darkness. We realize, of course, that there is little in the bush capable of hurting anyone, save some big cats and a few rare snakes. But, as a sceptic has said, it is not reason which governs men.

132 Late that night forked lightning lit up the eerie passages of the jungle. The corridors of trees were filled with wind. The branches, whipped furiously by the great volume of fast

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

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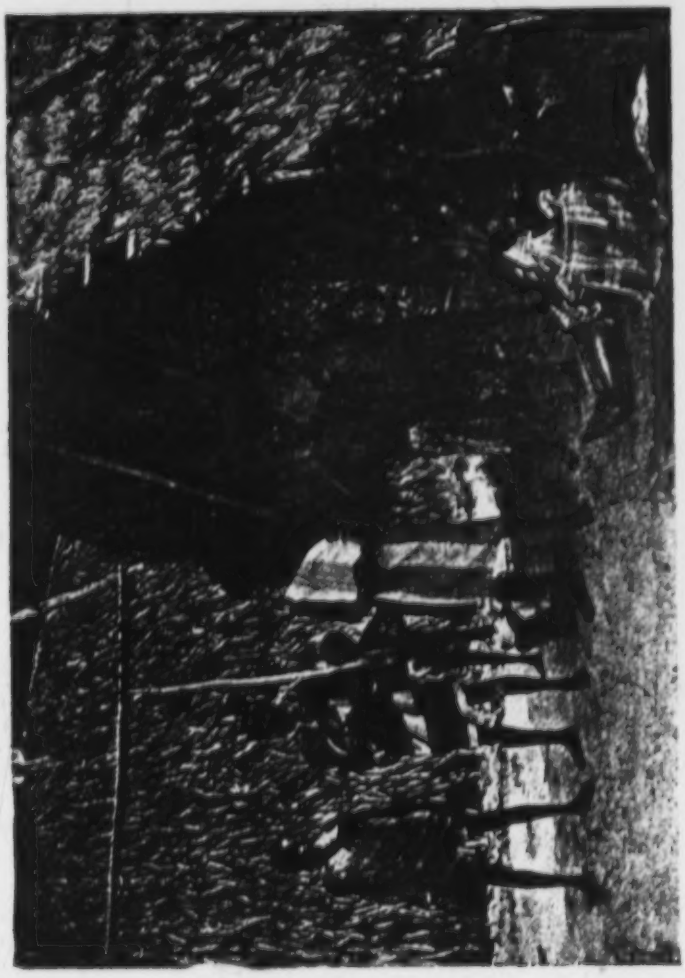

A Family Group, Lower Saramacca River.

[Facing p. 92]

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Bonis



Although the huts are of Africanesque architecture, similar 342
to those of the Aucaner tribe, there is, at times, more wooden board in the construction and less thatch.

During the expedition of 1928 we were informed that the 316
Bonis, particularly at the village of Apatoo, were conversant 326
with the old West African method of smelting iron and manufacturing it into implements of various kinds. This claim proved to be entirely groundless. If there is any iron ore in the neighbourhood, these tribesmen do not know where it is, and most certainly do not understand how to smelt it.

It was in Africa that the art of iron working is supposed to have originated, and the iron work of West Africa, whence the Djukas came, is a thing of beauty. But the Djukas have lost this hereditary art. Among the Bonis, the work in metal seems to be limited to the soldering of copper French coins to bracelets made of iron or copper pipe, which they procure by trade or from the machinery of long abandoned French gold exploitations. They also make brass bracelets and anklets of considérable width out of brass piping obtained from a similar source. The piping is split with the sharp blade of an axe and hammered into shape with the blunt end. We were able to obtain a stiletto with an iron blade and a handle of brass riveted to it with copper, but we are under the impression that the blade, at least, is of French or Italian manufacture.

In their general habits as regards hunting, fishing, agri- 184
culture, canoe building, social customs and structure, dress, 619
and so on, the Bonis are quite similar to the Aucaners. They speak a dialect of talkee-talkee which has distinct differences [191
from the Aucaner and the Saramaccaner in that it contains a 197]
good deal of French fatals.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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A Bush Negro Mother on the Lower Saramacca River.

[Facing p. 112]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



Marriage requires a bride price, consisting of pieces of 583
cloth, sugar, tobacco, and some carved wooden implements, such as combs, paddles, trays. These are handed over to the bride's family as presents. Then the wife simply moves into her husband's hut, or he into hers. Despite their pre-marital 585
promiscuity, it is said that on the bridal night all the inhabitants of a Bush Negro village will gather outside the hut to hear what the husband has to say regarding the bride's virginity. If the girl is not a virgin, part of the bride price may be refunded, at the husband's discretion. The gathering on such an occasion is attended by much jocularity.

The Djuka husband builds a hut for each one of his women 593
and has another for himself, to which he may retire when- 342
ever he feels the need of bachelor seclusion. The woman 591
sleeps in her own hut, cooks, and raises her children there. The husband comes to her when he wants to, and leaves her for another wife when impulse so guides him. She seldom quarrels with the other wives, who may even live in separate villages.

Each wife has her own provision ground, where she grows 593
rice and cassava; her husband has cleared it for her. The cas- 241
sava fields are owned by individual women, but are held in 562
very loose tenure. At harvest time, or when a plague of in- [423]
sects is threatening, the women of several households work [476]
together in common.

The man's hut is called his *gudu oso,* or "treasure house." 342
It serves to impress his women with his importance and 556
wealth. They are forbidden to enter it, but, woman-like, they insist on peeping in. So he keeps many boxes and wood carv-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



342 556 ings inside, to give the idea of affluence. The women looking into the dim interior are awed by the numerous boxes. They are usually empty, however.

837 684 [622] When men go away on hunting or fishing trips, adultery frequently occurs. If it is discovered by the husband's family, they seize the wife and beat her. Her own family rushes to her aid, and a general mêlée ensues. The village is soon in an uproar, and to the captain belongs the unpleasant and thankless task of stopping the fight. There is considerable excitement for a few minutes. Many a hot listless evening is provided with a momentary thrill because someone's wife has been careless. After the mêlée the wife is usually forgiven, and the village returns to its normal routine.

586 Divorce is easy. A married woman merely informs the bosseia and captain, and moves out of her husband's hut, going back to her parents or to her lover. Even this formality may be dispensed with if she simply locks the door and refuses to let her husband enter. There is an heroic simplicity to this procedure. The husband may do the same, divorcing any one of his wives without assigning any reason for his action. The parting—we hesitate to distinguish it as a divorce—is usually on the woman's initiative; men leave their wives not so often as their wives leave them. Usually a husband will endure a wife until domestic dissension makes his life unbearable. Among women the motives for divorce vary; a husband's impotence is a very adequate reason, for of all masculine virtues the Djuka women esteem virility the most. Impotence seems to be common among primitive peoples after

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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A Witch Doctor's House, Upper Surinam River. The sugar-cane stalks and the turtle shell impaled on a staff are badges of this profession.

[Facing p. 136]

682 /8 cont./
[672] culprit is condemned to find the requital in his offspring. His
[567] children, children's children, and great-grandchildren must render slave services for the family of the person poisoned.

692 Moreover, they usually act in accordance with the judgment and the decision of their elders or council members. Most punish-
681 ments consist of whip lashes.

## Chapter IV

## Weapons

411 These consist of rifles, machetes, bow and arrow, and lances.
278 In some cases they also use a kind of cudgel (1). The most dangerous
682

1. An Indian weapon called apoetoe.

one that they possess, however, is an assortment of vegetable poisons with which they can secretly strike their enemies and whose effects manifest themselves slowly, but are usually lethal. They not only mix these with one food or another, or in snuff or tobacco, but in the case of some can merely bring them in contact with a part of the body and thereby produce to the most infectious results.

/9/

## Chapter V

## Dwellings, Practices, Customs, Housekeeping

342 Their huts are constructed low above the ground from un-
824 worked round wood, covered with pina, the leaves of a palm species (1), and surrounded by palisade pales.

1. Euterpe oleracea Mart.

352 The couches and sleeping places within are also made of paling.

354 Inside the hut is found the hearth or place for the fire, on
372 which they cook and in which they constantly maintain a fire for

354 /9 cont./
[372] they do not like to be without it; at least they do not like to
[353] sleep without a fire. Their weapons hang above their sleeping
[513] place, which is a hammock, in which man and wife sometimes lie
342 together. Rarely do more than one man and one woman with their small children live in a single hut.

296 Their articles of clothing, as well as other small belongings,
251 are kept in pagalen, a kind of plaited basketwork, while they keep
415 water, strong drinks, sugar juice, rice, salt, and so forth in
824 calabashes and godos (2).

2. Both hollowed-out fruit rinds of the Crescentia cagete L. and the Cucurbita lagenaria L., plants from the family of the Cucurbitaceae.

415 Some of them have cedarwood clothes-chests, which must be specially mounted with a great deal of copper; one also sometimes finds liqueur cellars with gilded bottles.

353 For the rest everything is left out in the open in the hut.

264 Often many men come together in one hut for their meals and eat out of one large bowl or calabash. The women withdraw after having placed on very low tables several calabashes or bowls of food for their husbands in the circle in which they are seated, never forgetting to add a large calabash with clean water for washing the hands before and after the meal. The women gather in another hut in order to consume what they kept out for themselves beforehand and what has been left by their husbands.

[888] If an aged person or a highly placed person is in their midst,
[554] he is offered the calabash of food first, so that he may take from it what he wants and eat it by himself from an ordinary plate, although seated in the circle, /10/ while the others partake of their meal from the large bowl. In general they talk with one another during the meal, the highly placed person also taking part in the conversation.

/6 cont./

133 Flooding is very variable according to the configuration of the rivers and the nature of the terrain.

133 At the Creole village of Grigel, situated at the bottom of
361 a glove-finger loop of the Waki River, the June flooding reaches
171 a level of eight meters above the average level in the dry season; the Creole and Indian villages of the Waki are established on hills. On the contrary, along the Lawa whose course is rectilinear, the variation in level is seldom greater than four meters. The maximum water level is 50 centimeters to one meter /above/ the soil of the alluvial terrace. Several of the Creole and Boni villages of the Lawa are even established at the very edge of the great river; the houses are built on piles and their occupants go home by boat during several weeks of the year. Nevertheless, most of the villages and farming habitations are outside the reach of flooding on terraces situated about five meters above the high-water mark, which are found from place to place at the edge of the river and which perhaps mark vestiges of an ancient terrace. This is notably the case with Bonitille and Loka villages.

137 The whole of the territory is entirely covered by equatorial forest: a forest continuous and dense which extends over hundreds of kilometers without a village, without a clearing, without a trail.

The Guiana forest is less high than is ordinarily thought. It is an infinite succession of trees of all dimensions and of extremely varied species, among which true giants are rare; the average height of the cover is around 30 meters, and large trunks are rare.

824 The variety of species is very great; and the useful ones, few in number and dispersed, are difficult to exploit. The Refugee Blacks, who have a deep knowledge of the forest and its resources, utilize scarcely ten species out of the some 200 which they differentiate, judging the others unusable either because their

J.Hurault--58a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Fig. 5. Boni Village

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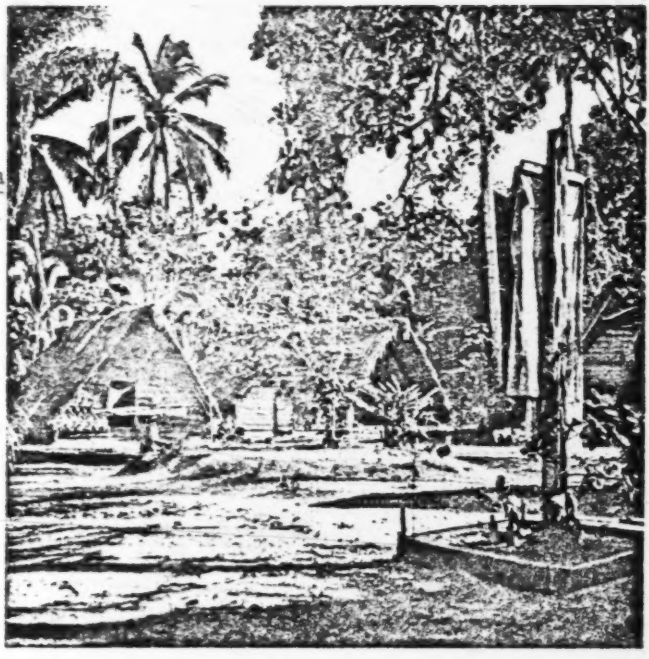

Fig. 6. The fraga
'ikí of the Kotika
ns.

/39 cont./

648 posts except as they present themselves for recording of vital statistics or for registration on voting lists.

administration has for a long time appeared /40/ in the eyes of the inhabitants of the interior as a benevolent office); but they obey the old African maxim of never telling the whites more than half of what they know.

125 In the absence of any nominal census which could serve as a point of departure, this job presented considerable difficulties arising principally from the extreme mobility of the population:

[484] —Never is the whole population of a village assembled together simultaneously; the proportion of those absent frequently reaches 50 per cent, especially in the fine season (hunting, fishing, boating, clearings at the farming habitations, etc.);

[551] —A good many men and women have two, sometimes three, names used interchangeably. If one does not personally know a large part of the inhabitants of the villages and does not have at his disposal carefully made-up genealogical tables, it is impossible to understand anything;

1115 —If the men respond in good faith, it is not the same with the women, who are inaccessible to any reasoning. Some try to cash in on the information they give, others obstinately refuse to answer;

125 591 342 —A number of adolescents and even of men between 20 and 35 years old have no regular hut. Each Boni, man or woman, is in principle expected to build a hut in one of the "great villages." But this residence may be fictitious: It can, for example, be a tumbled-down hut which they intend to put up again some day... or the pent roof of the house of the mother or a brother, under which they install themselves on days when a ceremony causes the lineage to meet together, residing the rest of the year in a farming habitation.

6:Hurault--107a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/facing p. 76/

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Fig. 15. House type of the Refugee Blacks; Loabi village (Djuka of the Upper Tapanahoni).

/150 cont./

593 342 461 [198] Nothing marks better the small place the conjugal bond has in a man's life; imagine the torture which this forced living and crowding together represent for each of these women! The Boni of today, much richer than their ancestors and better equipped with tools, are singularly lazier in building houses; no longer is anyone seen to sculpture and decorate the façades lovingly; when a man, after many recriminations, decides to build a house for his wife, he is content most of the time now with a simple shelter with plaited walls, which does not require 30 days work.

595 As we have said, each man may take as many wives as he wishes, on condition that he can supply their needs; but in practice the maintenance of a household is so heavy a load that most men have only one or two wives; only one to our knowledge has three. In fact, it is contrary to custom to free oneself by paying for work which one must do for one's wife. We have never heard it said that a rich man (many of them have hundreds of thousands of francs in savings) paid money in place of a piece of work, or paid someone to do it for him. The furnishing of imported objects is particularly burdensome, especially cloth, kitchen utensils (Boni women are infatuated with aluminum objects), and occasionally jewels. The Boni conceded in 1958 that the maintenance of a wife amounted to 30 to 40 thousand francs a year at least. If one considers that a hard-working man earned about 120,000 francs a year, that he spent 30 to 40 thousand francs a year for himself, that he often had /151/ in addition to provide for the needs of his aged parents and share the expenses of the festivals of the lineage, one sees that he could not have more than two wives at the same time. As for less hard-working men, who have no more than 60 to 80 thousand francs a year in ready money, they have a great deal of trouble in facing the maintenance of a single household, and many divorces have no other cause.

593 [461] [556] [454] [439] [511] [434] [511] [695] [434] [511] [586]

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Fig. 26. Woman possessed by a Papa gadu god.

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Fig. 27. Dance of possession (Papa gadu worship).

/272 cont./

*539 It began to fry for them. It fried until... they went to get their other brothers and their mother Wénon. They arrived, carrying calabashes and all sorts of receptacles; comrades, they put in them meat, fritters, all kinds of food. They loaded themselves up with all these things to the very limit.

They said: "Stop." It stopped, gban! Comrades, they climbed up to the attic (1); they lifted up the bunches of rice,

• [342]

1. Meaning by that the roof of huts, separated by a ceiling of planks.

they slipped all that underneath, zou! They hid these things so that Anansi might not see them, until they were finished. There! They went, took some lemon, took a brush. They cried: "We are going to teach Anansi a lesson today, we are tired of hearing him say that he does not want to eat spinach, we are going to make him see!" And so they did. They poured the lemon juice, tollo! They rubbed the (frying-pan) with rice straw (2). It is done! They hung it up again.

2. It is necessary to understand that it was through malevolence and not inadvertence that Anansi's wife and children destroyed the power of the frying-pan.

They went away until dinner time. Anansi came. Wénon had cooked spinach with rice: "Brother Anansi, since thou art already here, come, take something to eat; we have not found much that was good." He said: "Sister, I am still not eating. My belly is not open. While I was walking in the